

For Immediate Release, Contact: Senator Margaret Rotundo (207) 784-3259 or Rep. John Patrick (207) 364-7666

Maine's Citizen Trade Policy Commission Seeks an Active Role in Helping Maine Businesses Handle Border Issues

AUGUSTA – The Citizen Trade Policy Commission (Commission) announces that it will seek public input on how international trade agreements such as the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) have impacted Maine businesses that conduct cross border operations with Canada at its public meeting to be held on November 21, 2005, at the Houlton Southside Middle School from 5 -8 PM in Houlton. “The Commission is aware that the NAFTA has resulted in border practices with Canada that are hurting Maine businesses.” said Senator Margaret Rotundo. “We are looking to the business sector to help us understand the scope of border issues facing Maine’s businesses so that the Commission can work with Maine’s Congressional Delegation and the Office of the United States Trade Representative to address those issues.”

The importance of such hearings was highlighted last year when the Commission at a similar public hearing received testimony about the improper application of NAFTA regarding the transport and set up of modular homes coming into Maine from Canada. As a result of that public hearing, the Commission and Maine’s Congressional Delegation took action and helped address that issue and improve Maine’s competitiveness with Canada. “I encourage anyone who has something to say about the flow of goods and services between Maine and Canada to come and present testimony at the public hearing in Houlton.” Representative Patrick said. “The Commission is in a position to help with local border issues but we need those businesses who deal with border issues on a daily basis to alert us to problems that arise from the application of trade agreements.”

The Houlton Southside Middle School is located at 65 South Street, Houlton, Maine. For more information on the venue visit the school on its webpage at www.sad29.k12.me.us. Those who cannot attend the meeting can send comments to the Commission by email at Curtis.Bentley@legislature.maine.gov.

The Citizens Trade Policy Commission was established by the Legislature in May of 2004 to assess and monitor the legal and economic impacts of trade agreements on state and local laws, working conditions and the business environment; to provide a mechanism for citizens and Legislators to voice their concerns and recommendations and to make policy recommendations designed to protect Maine’s jobs, business environment and laws from any negative impact of trade agreements.